

**DRAFT**  
**Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 13, 2008**

A meeting of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC) was held on Thursday March 13, 2008, at the American Legion Department of Virginia Headquarters Building, 1708 Commonwealth Avenue, Richmond.

**Members Present**

Mason Botts, *Air Force Association*  
Robert Gray, *American Ex-POWs*  
Connie O'Neill, *American Legion (1<sup>st</sup> half of meeting)*  
Jim Aucoin, *AMVETS*  
Sam Wilder, *AUSA*  
Daniel Miller, *Disabled American Veterans*  
John Dozier, *Korean War Veterans Association*  
Richard Rinaldo, *Legion of Valor*  
John C. Bonnell, Jr., *Marine Corps League*  
Norman Jasper, *Military Order of the Purple Heart*  
Wes Edwards, *MOAA*  
Bill Townsley, *MOWW*  
David Ellis, *NAUS*  
Goodwin Sacra, *Navy Seabee Veterans of America*  
John T. Jackson, *Paralyzed Veterans of America*  
Thomas Stephen, *Reserve Officers Association*  
Frank Sherman, *Roanoke Valley Veterans Council*  
Daniel Boyer, *Veterans of Foreign Wars*  
Jenny Holbert, *Women Marines Association*  
Vince Burgess, *Commissioner of Veterans Services*  
Paul Galanti, *Chairman of Board of Veterans Services*

**Members Absent**

Thomas Snee, *Fleet Reserve Association*  
Richard Schneider, *Non-Commissioned Officers Association*  
Michala Smith, *WAVES*

**Alternates Present (representing their Veterans Service Organization)**

Dale Chapman, *American Legion (2<sup>nd</sup> half of meeting)*  
John Velleca, *Virginia National Guard Association*

**Alternates Present (not representing their VSO)**

John Cooper, *AMVETS*  
Jack Hilgers, *Legion of Valor*  
Don Kaiserman, *MOAA*

David Coffield, *Paralyzed Veterans of America*  
Kim, DeShano, *Veterans of Foreign Wars*

### **Commonwealth of Virginia Officials Present**

Anne Atkins, *Department of Veterans Services*  
Martha Mead, *Department of Veterans Services*  
Judy Reid, *Department of Veterans Services*  
Steven Combs, *Department of Veterans Services*  
Tasmyn Childress, *Department of Veterans Services*  
Don Ferguson, *Office of the Attorney General*

### **Others Present**

Thomas Hinton, *U.S. DOD*  
John R. Clickener, *VCOC-MOAA*  
Mike Coleman, *Virginia National Guard Association*

### **Agenda Packet**

- Agenda
- Draft Minutes of the December 19, 2007 Meeting
- Draft Minutes of the January 14, 2008 Meeting
- DVS Bill Tracking Matrix
- JLC Legislative Objectives 2008- Lessons Learned
- News Release -Virginia Department of Veterans Services
- Possible State Legislative Objectives for 2009- Draft

### **Additional Handouts**

- Virginia Veterans Service Foundation Boucher
- Key Issues- The Department of Defense/State Military Partnership Packet
- Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children

### **Opening and Pledge of Allegiance**

Sam Wilder called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. **Paul Galanti** led the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Roll Call of VSOs, Quorum Determination, and Oaths**

New JLC members Wes Raymond Edward and Bill Townsley were sworn in and welcomed to the JLC.

Twenty of the twenty-three Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) represented on the JLC were recorded as being represented (nineteen by a primary member; one by an alternate member), the Commissioner of Veterans Services and the Chairman of the Board of Veterans Services were recorded as present, and a quorum was determined. Mr. Dale Chapman sat in for Mr. Connie O'Neil for the second half of the meeting.

## **Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Led by Chairman Wilder

Chairman Wilder asked the Council to review the draft minutes of the December 19, 2007 and January 14, 2008 meeting.

### **December 19, 2007 Draft Minutes**

Correction 1: On page two under the Alternates Present (not representing their VSO), Mr. John Cooper will be added as being present to the meeting.

Correction 2: The draft reads: “Women Marine Association.” It will be changed to read: “Women Marines Association.”

A **motion** was made by Mr. Boyer, seconded by **Mr. Bonnell**, and passed unanimously, to adopt the amended minutes of December 19, 2007.

### **January 14, 2008 Draft minutes**

Correction 1: The draft reads: “Women Marine Association.” It will be changed to read: “Women Marines Association.”

A **motion** was made by Mr. Miller, seconded by Mr. Boyer, and passed unanimously, to adopt the minutes of January 14, 2008.

## **Overview of 2008 General Assembly JLC Legislative Objectives**

Led by Steve Combs

JLC Objective	Bill Number	Patron	Short Title	Status	Received
JLC Obj 1		Governor	Turbo Vet- Funding \$300 thousand- current FY08	Not Included	\$100 thousand
		Cole	Turbo Vet- Funding \$260 thousand- FY09/10	Not Included	
		Edwards	Turbo Vet- Funding \$300 thousand- FY09/10	Not Included	
JLC Obj 2	SB170	Blevins	Custody and visitation orders; modification based on active military duty	Did not pass	
	SB188S2	Herring	Military Parents Equal Protection Act; created	<b>PASSED</b>	
JLC Obj 3 Wounded Warrior Mental Health Care	HB475H1	Cox	Mental health and rehabilitative services; Dept of Veterans Services et al., to establish program	<b>PASSED</b>	\$4.5 Million for the next two years. Requested just under \$6 million.
	HB1064	Brink	Veterans Services; mental health program	Did not pass	
	SB297ES1	Puller	Veterans; Commissioner, et al. to establish comprehensive program to address mental health needs	<b>PASSED</b>	
	SB304	Houck	Veterans; Commissioner et al., to develop various mental health programs	Did not pass	
JLC Obj 4 Virginia War Memorial Education Center	HB474H1	Cox	Virginia War Memorial; State Treasurer to advance loan for construction of an educational wing. When the War Memorial reaches 1 million in private donation the state will release 500 million. When the Memorial reaches 2 million in private funding the state will release the remained of the 6 million.	<b>PASSED</b>	Over 2 million in additional funding , now up to 8.1 million in funding
	SB662S1	Stosch	Virginia War Memorial	<b>PASSED</b>	
JLC Obj 5 Tax relief for 100% disabled veterans	HJ18	Lingamfelter	Constitutional amendment; property tax exemption for certain veterans (first reference)	Continued to 2009	Have to be brought up before the 2009 session,
	HJ38	Ware, O	Constitutional amendment; property tax exemption for	Continued to	

			certain veterans (first reference)	2009	
	SJ8	Puller	Constitutional amendment; property tax exemption for certain veterans (first reference)	Continued to 2009	
	SJ10	Reynolds	Constitutional amendment; property tax exemption for certain veterans (first reference)	<b>PASSED</b>	
<b>JLC Obj 6 Tax Relief for Citizen Soldiers called to Active Duty</b>	HB473	Watts	Income tax, state; subtraction for National Guard or Reserve personnel pay	Continued to 2009 House Finance	
	HB1193	Moran	Military Service Personnel Bill of Rights of 2008	House Finance	
	HB1364	Cline	Income tax, state; subtraction for National Guard or Reserve personnel pay	Continued to 2009 House Finance	
	SB293	Puller	Income tax, state; subtraction for National Guard or Reserve personnel pay	Senate Finance	
	SB502	Northam	Income tax, state; subtraction for National Guard or Reserve personnel pay	Senate Finance	
<b>JLC Obj 7 Credit Freeze</b>	HB175	Ware, O	Credit reports; authorizes military personnel and their spouses to freeze access thereto	<b>Incorporated in HB1311</b>	
	HB1307	Morgan	Credit reports; fee exemption for security freezes for military personnel	<b>Incorporated in HB1311</b>	
	SB325	Wagner	Credit reports; authorizes armed services members and spouses to freeze	<b>Incorporated in SB576</b>	
	SB461	Whipple	Credit reports; security freezes for armed services members	<b>Incorporated in SB576</b>	
<b>DVS and boards</b>	HB229H1	Cosgrove	Veterans services; changes references under powers and duties to Secretary of Public Safety	<b>PASSED</b>	
	HB477	Cox	Veterans Services Foundation; established to provide funding for veteran services and programs	<b>Incorporated in HB1311</b>	
	HB943	Jones, D.C.	Veterans services; changes references under powers and duties of Commissioner	<b>Incorporated in HB229</b>	
	HB1104	Bouchard	Veterans services; changes references under powers and duties to Secretary of Public Safety	<b>Incorporated in HB229</b>	
	SB314	Edwards	Veterans Services Foundation; established to provide funding for veteran services and programs	<b>PASSED</b>	
	SB521	Locke	Veterans services; changes references under powers & duties of Commissioner of Veterans Services	<b>Incorporated in SB760</b>	
	SB760S1	Wagner	Veterans services in the Commonwealth	<b>PASSED</b>	
<b>Virginia War Memorial Transfer</b>	SB580	Edwards	War Memorial Foundation; Department of Veterans Services to be ex officio members of board	<b>PASSED</b>	
<b>Service- Disabled Veteran- Owned Small Business</b>	HB1386	Miller, J.H.	Service-disabled veteran-owned small business programs; aligns state's requirements with federal	<b>PASSED</b>	
	SB680	Wagner	Service-disabled veteran-owned small business programs	<b>PASSED</b>	
<b>501(c)(19) Organizations</b>	SB459	Ruff	Retail Sales and use tax; exemptions for nonprofit entities exempt from federal income taxes	Senate Finance	
<b>Veterans Education</b>	HB524	Suit	In-state tuition; eligibility for certain military personnel	<b>PASSED</b>	
	HB1109	Shannon	Veterans; tuition waiver for certain	Continued to 2009	
<b>Fishing Permits</b>	HB319	Cox	Fishing permit, special; issued to patients from veterans or military hospitals	<b>PASSED</b>	

Mr. Combs reported that House Bill 229 Veterans Services; Dept. to establish guidelines for eligibility for domiciled veterans, House Bill 477 Veterans Service Foundation; established as a body politic and to fund veteran services and programs, SB 314 Veterans Service Foundation; established to provide funding for veteran services and programs and also SB 760 Veterans Service; Dept. to establish guidelines for eligibility for domiciled veterans, etc., all add the JLC Chairman as an ex-officio member to the Veteran Service Foundation (VSF) and adds the VSF Chairman as an ex-officio member to the JLC. Mr. Combs also reported that SB314 and HB 477

will increase the size of the VSF. The VSF will go from 8 citizen member to 16 citizen members. The VSF will now have 19 total members, including the Chairman of the JLC and the new 8 members. The additional members will help the foundation better carry out its mission. House Bill 229 and House Bill 477 furthermore brought clarity that the VSF's mission is fund raising, for the DVS.

Mr. Combs explained that SB 580 War Memorial Foundation; increase it's membership by adding a new legislative members. The War Memorial Foundation will also transfer the administrative support from the Department of General Service to the Department of Veteran Services. The DVS administrative role will mostly deal with human resources and finance, but not limited to. The Secretary of Administration, which replaces the Secretary of Public Safety, and the Commissioner of Veterans Services are both added on as ex officio members to the War Memorial Foundation..

Mr. Combs reported that two bills were passed on service disabled veterans, HB 1386 Service-disabled veteran-owned small business programs; aligns state's requirements with federal and SB 680 Service-disabled veteran-owned small business programs; aligns state's requirements with federal. Last year this was an issue that the JLC addressed. The Chairman of the JLC wrote a letter to the governor on behave of the JLC, asking for the state program to be aligned with the Federal program. The old program state requirements were that the service members had to have 50% or greater disability and a 10% or greater disability if combat related. This new program opens it up to all disabled veterans.

Mr. John Cooper explained to the JLC how payday lending affects veterans. There have been some significant actions this year to restrict the payday lending industry. House Bill 12 Pay Day Loan Act states that, "Payday lenders are able to charge, 36% interest at an annual rate, not more than a 20% loan fee and a \$5 verification fee". Payday lenders are also prohibited from knowingly making loans to a member of the military service or spouse or dependent of such person.

Commissioner Burgess thanked the JLC and DVS team, for all their hard work and for reporting and keeping everyone up to date with the Bills and the JLC objectives. Chairman Wilder also Thanked Mr. Combs for keeping everyone informed by sending out the "DVS Bill Tracking Matrix to all members of the JLC. Mr. Galanti would like to also make everyone aware that the JLC is the most powerful organization that is affecting the General Assembly decision process .

Mr. O'Neil does not believe that the Veterans Service Foundation (VSF) is an effective foundation. He questioned the need to expand the VSF from 10 to 19 members, and wanted to know how adding new members will affect the foundation.

Mr. Combs explained to Mr. O'Neil that the Senate will added 8 additional members which will be appointed by the General Assembly, and all new members must have financial management as well as fundraising experience, which members before were not required.

Chairman Wilder explained that the VSF is critical to the JLC. VSF is a board that actively raises funds. The JLC goes after three different sources of funding for various programs and projects.

One of the sources that the JLC needs is private funding. The VSF is the organization that the JLC should be able to ask for private funds. The JLC should be providing the VSF with the top legislative objectives, so that the foundation is aware of the issues, and can aid in raise money for those issues.

Chairman Wilder announced that at the February 28, 2008 Wounded Warrior Mental Health Care Fundraising reception, Mrs. Joan Washburn raised about \$30 thousand in funds, and an additional \$20 thousand in pledges. \$50 thousand had already been raised for the Wounded Warrior program before the event. The event was hosted by the Richmond office of McGuire Woods Consulting, LLC and the Salem –based Military Family Support Centers. The money was raised, with the intentions that the money will go to the JLC. A second fund raiser is planned for the 29<sup>th</sup> of April at VMI. The proceeds from this event will go to the Veterans Service Fund as designated contributions for the Wounded Warrior Mental Health Program. Mrs. Joan Washburn has been involved in helping the JLC reach its goal. Mrs. Washburn has also been a top fundraiser all over the state for politicians. Her mission is to help the JLC with the Wounded Warrior Mental Health Plan.

Mr. Hilgers cleared up misconceptions about the VSF. The foundation did not solicit any funds actively, but in four years they have gotten up to \$80 thousand dollars in contributions, that has gone to McGuire and other veteran facilities. The VSF has raised over \$350 thousand with approximately 700 donations. VSF has helped with funding in areas such as veteran claim processing, Sitter and Barfoot Veterans Care Center, the Veterans Care Center planned for the Hampton Roads area, and the Wounded Warrior Mental Health Care program.

Mr. Rinaldo would like the JLC to applaud and thank the individuals that voted on their bills and showed support by sending letters from the JLC.

## **JLC Legislative Objectives, Lessons Learned**

Led by Chairman Wilder

### **Legislative Timeline**

Chairman Wilder would like the JLC to agree on the legislative objectives in August. This will gives the council from August through December to develop issue and position papers. The position papers have been the key to getting the issues narrowed down, organized, and ready for Patrons to view.

### **Patrons Obtained for each Objective**

Chairman Wilder stated that the JLC was able to get patrons for each of their top legislative objectives except Turbo Vet. The National Guard Custody Bill was the only bill that did not have a patron from both the House and the Senate side. The objective of the day on the Hill was to get co-patrons.

Mr. Miller proposed that in preparation for next year, the JLC holds a workshop to help with the mechanics and what members should expected at the JLC day on the hill.

### **Chairman 's Report Sent to All 140 Legislators**

Chairman Wilder decided to use the Chairman's Annual Report, which is due by the 30 of November to the Commissioner of Veteran Services, as a tool to advertise the JLC. Chairman Wilder sent the report to all 140 delegates to let them know who the JLC is and what the JLC's mission is. He also added a chairman message and the JLC legislative objective with position papers for each objective. The JLC is the voice of the Veterans and Chairman Wilder believes that the politicians should be checking with the JLC to see what the veteran's issues are.

#### JLC Day At The General Assembly

The Governor as well as others wanted to speak to the veterans at the JLC day at the General Assembly. The day on the hill gave the JLC visibility and the JLC received a standing obation.

Chairman Wilder thanked Jack Hilgers for the planning and the effort of getting the people to together for a successful Day on the Hill.

Mr. Hilgers thanked Mr. Martinez, Mr. Kaiserman, Mr. Combs, Mr. O'Neil, Mr. Flaggen, Chairman Wilder, and Mr. Shelton for their help as Committee members. Mr. Hilgers reported that the scheduling worked out for the day on the hill, but would prefer to have two photographers for the next JLC event. Chairman Wilder said that it is a good idea to add preparation for the day on the hill to the December JLC agenda.

#### Numerous Co Patrons Signed on

The objective of the day on the hill was to get co-patrons for the legislative objectives. The Wounded Warrior Mental Health program bill got 82 co patrons to sign on, which show that the JLC is moving in the right direction. Mr. Hilgers walked the halls and got people to sign the sheets.

#### Excellent Support for Patrons In Committee Hearings

Chairman Wilder expressed the importance of someone from the JLC being available to help in committee hearings.

Chairman Wilder would like to thank MOAA, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Kaiserman, Mr. Clickerner, Mr. Williams, Mr. Hilgers, Commissioner Burgess, Mrs. Mead, Mr. McGinnis from Mental health, and the DVS team for their support. Between them someone was always present at the sub committee hearing. Delegate Terry Suite was on the subcommittee and winded up being the committee Chairperson. Delegate Suite did not allow any outside support or discussion while in session, due to the amount of bills they have to take care of. What she did do was ask everyone in favor of the bill to please stand. The Chairman explained that this is where big organizations like MOAA can help. That day the veterans happen to make up 2/3 of the public present.

#### Good "Turnout of Troops" On Short Notice

Chairman Wilder would like to have more public awareness on the Wounded Warrior Mental Health Program.

Mr. O'Neil would like to see the JLC sending out letters to editors to schedule a face to face meeting and explain who the JLC is and give other background information as well as objectives.

### Empathy and Timing for Wounded Warrior Was Excellent

Chairman Wilder thinks that they are just getting started with the Wounded Warrior Mental Health program. He would like to raise the private funding, public awareness and coverage. Mr. O'Neil is going to work on a letter to send to the editor of a local paper for coverage on the issue.

Mr. Stephan would like for the JLC to copy Tom Sylvester, who is the president publisher of the Times Dispatch, the letter written by Mr. O'Neil, because he is receptive to receiving comments from subscribers.

### Overall Greater Support Than Ever For Veterans / Military

Delegate Kirkland Cox stated that there is greater support for veterans and military issues then ever before. Instead of begging to come people were asking if they could come.

### Revised Legislative Objectives Must Reflect Our True Priorities

Chairman Wilder showed a few examples where the organizations top priorities are not always shown that way. Chairman Wilder expressed that he would like to change the priority list of the objectives. He would like for the December meeting to be the last meeting where changes can be made to the objectives. If changes are made then just say that the objectives are revised. The priorities are important. The sheet with the JLC objectives is important because legislators like to go down the list.

Mr. Hilgers said that there should be something that works out for the JLC and the VSO members, if they do not have the same objectives. He would like to keep the confusion level down and would like to have a committee formed to work on the JLC.

Mrs. Holbert would like to wait to number the priority list until after the Governors Budget. Mr. Boyer is agreeing with Mrs. Holbert and wait to priorities the objectives until after the Governors Budget.

Mr. Rinaldo would like to would like to put more the just the top priorities on the list. He would like to list all supported objectives also.

### Do Bill- Not Budget Amendments- For All Priority Objectives

Do not rely on budget amendment to carry the top priorities. Budget amendments do not have hardly any visibility. If it is important enough to make a priority then it can be turned into a bill.

### Focus On Key Committee Members

Everyone needs to know who the key committee members are for each bill. Not all supporters are the same. The sub committee is the key when bill first goes in, but in the end there are only two committee, Senate Finance and House of Procreations.

The budget Amendment statement is too broad. Support the Department of Veteran Services. In the future they will not say support the service but say Support Turbo Vet. The bills need to be specified.

Mr. Sherman asked the committee if there is a time the budget amendments have to be out by.

Jack Hilgers explained that budget amendments are due at the end of the week legislation convenes. The Legislative always convenes the on the second Wednesday of January.

Chairman Wilder explained that with a bill there are time limits and there can put in as many bills as they want.

Mr. Hilgers told the group that next year they will be restricting the number of bills to 15, that legislators can file. This new rule even applies to pre-filing.

Mr. Miller would like to be made aware of whom they are the best way to contact them and send a letter to the key members supporting issues prior. Chairman Wilder said that the most effective way is to be a constituent.

Mr. Combs told the committee that on the bill matrix they list the JLC and DVS lead for each bill. He also let everyone know that the DVS staff is willing to research and help where they can.

Chairman Wilder told the committee can use the LIS, Legislative Information System. Steve put out information on how to do that. You can be notified of staff or bill change.

Mr. Cooper said that on the LIS site there is not a listing for veteran issues. Mr. Combs referred Mr. Cooper back to bill matrix he provided because he captured all veteran issues. Mr. Combs will show search tip to anyone who needs them.

Chairman Wilder would like to send a letter to Delegate Kirkland Cox for all his help. Every JLC member can send thank you letters on the JLC letter head. Vivian Watts and Mark Cole are also strong veterans advocates and also should be thanked.

Mr. O'Neil would like to have certificates or something tangible to give with the thank you letters. A **motion** was made by O'Neil to officially recognize Kirkland Cox which will be developed by the DVS staff and supported by the JLC 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Bonnel.

**The Council took a break for lunch between 12:04pm and 12:30pm.**

## **Overview of DoD State Legislative Goals**

Led by Thomas Hinton

Chairman Wilder announced that state legislative that have been urged by the Department off Defense. The Federal Government does not have the legal authority to implement these changes but they see them as helpful and useful.

Mr. Hinton is the Interstate Senior State Liaison in the office of the Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness. There job is to work on the issues that impact soldiers in the military. Issue that inters sect state policy that the federal government or the defense can do anything about and that is why they must go to the states to ask for help.

Mr. Hinton reported that in state tuition- for military and military dependence, was passed. At the time Virginia was the largest military population state that did not offer instate tuition to the fullest extend.

The key issues that Mr. Hinton talked about were:

1. Care of the Guard and Reserve  
Would like the states to provide support through educational benefits, tax and financial benefits, family support programs, special protections, recognition, licensing and registration support, and employment support
2. Assistance to Severely Injured Service Members  
Severely injured and their families should receive uninterrupted care. That is more of a program than a policy.
3. In State Tuition  
Members of Military families should be allowed in state tuition where assigned, and continue these rates for students following the reassignment and departure of their parents.  
Have soldiers and their families pay instate tuition fees
4. Military Children During School Transitions and Deployments  
Sates are asked to participate in an interstate compact providing a policy platform for resolving the challenges experienced by military children.
5. Spouse Employment  
States should accommodate the needs of transferring spouses through compacts and nationally recognize standards for licensure in desirable careers such as teaching, nursing and real estate.
6. Unemployment Compensation  
Military spruces should be eligible for financial assistance. The State of Virginia believes that spouses moving from the area due to a spouse military move is voluntary.
7. Predatory Lending  
States enforced federal and state protections for members and families where they are assigned.
8. Voting  
States should authorize flexible processes for absentee voters recommended by the Federal voting Assistance Program office.
9. Foreign Language Requirements  
States join with the Department of Defense as we frame a language strategy to develop language skills needed for national security.
10. Accessible Support for Military Family  
State mobilize through an integrated team to assist all military families with child care, resources for school, teachers and youth, and to facilitate easy access to information, service and support.

## **Possible State Legislative Objectives For 2009**

Led by Chairman Wilder

## **Issues Left Over From 2008**

Chairman Wilder reported that Turbo Vet funding received only 1/3 of the funding that was requested. Additional funding is trying to be obtained for Turbo Vet and for Wounded Warrior Mental Health program is needed. Some legislative may need to be worked out.

Chairman Wilder announced that Tax relief for 100% disabled veterans has been carried over.

Chairman Wilder reported that Tax relief for Virginia Citizen soldiers has been carried over into 2009. Mr. Townsley said that he does not see citizens of Virginia who are active duty military, in the National Guard, and Reserve only. Mr. Rinaldo explained that the National Guard and the Reserve have a partial tax relief. Mr. Boyer explained that this is to give the citizen soldier the same benefits as the active duty soldier.

Mr. John Clickener has been thought the subcommittee and committee hearing on the credit freeze and researched the issue. He said it is a federal responsibility but has not step forward on the issue besides placing the active duty alert, which he believes to be meaningless to deployed soldiers. Several bills have been introduced and patrons are already for next year if the JLC would like to support the issue. He believes that next year they could do a better job and he is willing to help the JLC. A fee of \$10 will be charged for each transaction made including internet transactions and establishing a freeze. Only people who are exempt from paying a fee are identity theft victims.

#### Other

Chairman Wilder was asked to help with assistance/ incentives for doctor to accept TRICARE. Mark Cole mentioned the issue to the Chairman. He carried the budget amendment and asked if the JLC could support the issue.

Chairman Wilder not sure if a need exist but would like to explore BRAC, base realignment and closure, issue. Fort Lee is doubling in size, they have transportation, school and construction issues in the community.

Military personnel bill of rights, that did not make it all the way through, but they can look into it.

Chairman Wilder reported that a resolution to adopt a national flag for veterans. Veterans in California are asking for support for a veteran's flag. They want each state to look at and make a resolution.

Mr. Bonnell would like to add that the "Missing in America Project" Would like to enhance the verifications of veterans in funeral homes. The JLC came be a leader and recommend new legislation to be help change the developed to change and protect funnel homes the remains , and the removal. [www.miap.us](http://www.miap.us). Mr. Bonnell is going to present a position paper to present at the next JLC meeting. VA will have to also cooperate. When the funeral do a list the will have to submit it to the VA. The VA will find out from the list which are soldiers and which are not. Mr. Townsley said that some of the remains are dated back to World War 1 soldiers and if they make it a problem the remains may disappear. Mr. Bonnell believes that legislation is al ready set in place to protect the remains. Mr. Boyer asked if there a re privacy issues involved. Mr. Townsley

said that there could be family remains. Mr. Galanti said that the Cemetery board is meeting before the next JLC meeting. The issue is on the agenda for the next meeting. Mr. Dozier said that the government is spending money finding soldiers in Vietnam and Korea.

Commissioner Burgess said that part of the purpose of the town hall meeting is to try and garner issues that are out there and cover those issues.

Mrs. Holbert asked if it was appropriate to act on behalf of service member children and spouses. The service member is active duty.

Mr. Hilger stated that HB229 and SB760 clarify, that the department requires the JLC to consider veterans benefits and dependents. Veterans are Virginia Guard, Virginia residents in the armed forces that qualify for veteran status and immediate family members.

Mr. Combs briefed the JLC that Mr. O'Neal would like to conduct a study on homeless veterans in the state of Virginia. The goal is to identify the resources and address the unique needs of homeless veterans as part of the Commonwealth's 10 year plan to end homelessness. The determine the extent of homelessness among veteran among the Commonwealth, examine current service and the best practices, identify the needs not currently meet and recommend how Virginia can partner with other agency to fill the gaps. Mr. O'Neil is asking for a bill and a budget amendment and a legislation that would require the department to commission the study.

### **Prepare for Election of New Officers**

Led by Chairman Wilder

The JLC is preparing for the election of new officers. The both takes place May 14, 2008. Chairman Wilder asked Mr. Botts to chair a nominating committee. Mr. Botts has asked Mr. O'Neal and Mr. Miller, all prior chairmen to sit as committee members. He is asking all members to send an email, and state if they want volunteer or if there is some reason why they can not serve.

Chairman Wilder and Commissioner Burgess presented Mr. Botts with a plaque for his service as the JLC previous chairman.

### **Open Discussion**

Led by Chairman Wilder

Mr. Cooper would like to know how far Mrs. Sarah Wilson, from human resources, has gotten with her research on veterans hiring preference. Mrs. Wilson stated that she was working on implementation language for veteran preference. Mr. Cooper tested out the hiring preference and do not believe that the program is in place or is working correctly. The JLC needs to look to see if Mrs. Wilson is truly looking to hire veterans. Mr. Cooper would like to know how many veterans have been hired.

Commissioner Burgess explained that veteran preference is the employer has two equally qualified people applying for the job. Then the veteran should get the job.

Mr. Cooper stated Mrs. Wilson does not understand the knowledge skills and abilities soldiers are achieving while on military duty. Employers think that military personnel are truck drivers and mechanics, but they are much more. The knowledge and skills far exceed what the public believes to be true.

### **Chairman's Report: Board of Veteran Services**

Led by Paul Galanti

Mr. Galanti would like to say that turbo vet did not get funded because the Governor said that it was his number one priority, but then it did not show up in his budget. When the Governor tried to put in a budget amendment, they discovered that the state was out of money. Every JLC objective should be made into a bill. Secretary of Veterans Affairs would like to see a demonstration of how Turbo Vet works. A demonstration will be given and the \$100 thousand will be released to the project.

Mr. Galanti thanked Mr. Hilgers for all that he has done to make the legislative process happen.

Mr. Galanti will present a power point presentation for the next meeting on Turbo Vet. Mr. Galanti added that turbo Vet is on an internal server that has fire wall protection. This type of system security will make sure that only the veterans and the veteran service officers are allowed access to information.

### **Department of Veterans Services Initiatives**

Led by Commissioner Vince Burgess

The Commissioner said that the JLC organization has gone through a change. He would like JLC to recognize the accomplishments that they have made, while they are making more.

Commissioner Burgess wanted everyone to know that Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center is up and running. The new facility has 22 individual residents at the facility to date. The care center has just completed their certification inspections. DVS is in the process of planning a dedication ceremony to dedicate the portraits of Sitter and Barfoot to the new facility.

Commissioner Burgess would like to thank Mr. Hilgers, Mrs. Mead, Mr. Combs, and Chairman Wilder. The State of Virginia deploys the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest number of soldiers overseas 1300,000. Veterans Affairs estimates that 38% of the soldiers come back from the current war need help with PTSD. If you add 2.5 family members that each soldier has, then the number goes to 177,000. The 177,000 affected soldiers and family members are the individuals that need help.

The DVS team is hosting 6 town hall meetings in the month of April. They are scheduled at the VFW and various American Legion Buildings. Mrs. Atkins has volunteered to capture the key points at each town hall session. Along with Mrs. Atkins the following members will also attend:

April 2, 2008 Dale City- Mrs. Holbert  
April 8, 2008 Galax- Mr. Boyer  
April 9, 2008 Front Royal- Mr. Chapman

April 17, 2008 Salem- Mr. Sherman and Mr. Jasper  
April 28, 2008 Richmond- Chairman Wilder  
April 30, 2008 Norfolk- Mr. Bonnell and Mr. Townsley

Virginia is for Heroes conference will be March 26, 2008 at 8:00pm. Registration fee is \$45.00 and can be obtain by visiting [www.virginiaisforheroes.org](http://www.virginiaisforheroes.org) and the conference will be held at the Fort Monroe, Offices club. This is a follow from the conference at the Botanical Gardens last October. In the months to follow DVS will be hosting in the Western and Northern part of the state.

The agency had to cut cost. They are not cutting direct services, they are postponing filling admin positions until the economy improves and can spend the funds that were originally allocated.

Commissioner Burgess reported that the new West Virginia Veteran Cemetery is on track long-term to open the facility. The property transferred will take place at the end of the summer and the facility should open Memorial 2010.

John Anderson who was the DVS benefits district manager has been promoted to the program manager for DVS.

The Commissioner reported that his peer group held a presentation and the National Defense University is going to be a key player in funding Turbo Vet, and are hoping to get a \$5 million dollar grant. They are looking at 4 pilots and VSO that has claim agents. The 100 thousand will be the place holder.

Virginia War Memorial will be under DVS administratively effective July 1, 2008. Commissioner Burgess announced that he is looking forward to bringing them into the DVS family. Virginia has gone from 728,755 to 807,326 veterans living in the state.

Mr. Jasper announced that in May the Military Order of Purple Heart will be giving out 9 checks each for \$2222.00 totaling \$20 thousand, to different chapters in the state and the VVCC.

Mr. Kaiserman made a **motion** to put out a press release to emphasizes the JLC emphasizes on Wounded Warrior Mental Health Program and Turbo Vet, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mr. Townsley. Mr. Kaiserman stated that they have a VCOC meeting which is the Council of MOAA chapters. This is the last meeting before their congressional luncheon on the 16 of April in Washington and he would be able to let MOAA know that the JLC supports Turbo Vet and the Wounded Warrior Mental Health Program. If the two programs are approval of the JLC, the VCOC will back it. Mr. Kaiserman is looking for a newsletter. All members of the JLC were in favor.

### **Preparation for next meeting**

Led by Chairman Sam Wilder

The next JLC meeting will be Wednesday May 14, 2008. Next meeting agenda will include a Turbo Vet presentation, town hall meetings and veteran hiring preference. Chairman Wilder

would like each member to be prepared to discuss their organizations objectives. This will give the council enough time to vote and be prepared in August to develop the JLC legislatures objectives.

### **Public Comment Period**

There was no public comment.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chairman Wilder called for a motion to adjourn. A **motion** was made by many members, and a unanimous decision was made to close the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 2:25 p.m.